

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please AMEND claims 23-26, and ADD new claims 28-30, as follows. For the Examiner's convenience, all claims currently pending in this application have been reproduced below:

1-22. (Canceled)

23. (Currently Amended) An exposure apparatus for exposing a wafer to radiation via a mask, said apparatus comprising:

a process chamber in which the wafer is exposed to the radiation;

a load-lock chamber including first and second gate valves, and connected to said process chamber via said first gate valve;

a booth connected to said load-lock chamber via said second gate valve;

a transfer mechanism ~~arranged in said booth and~~ configured to transfer the wafer from another apparatus different from said exposure apparatus into said load-lock chamber through said booth; ~~and~~

a first gas flow forming mechanism ~~including a filter and~~ configured to cause clean gas through said filter to flow through said booth and across a path of the wafer in said booth, during transferring of the wafer by said transfer mechanism from the other apparatus into said load-lock chamber; and

a second gas flow forming mechanism configured to cause clean gas to flow through said load-lock chamber, during transferring of the wafer by said transfer mechanism from the other apparatus into said load-lock chamber.

24. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 23, wherein said first gas flow forming mechanism includes a filter, and a circulation unit configured to exhaust gas from said booth and to return the exhausted gas to said booth through said filter.

25. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 23, wherein said first gas flow forming mechanism includes a filter, and a fan unit configured to supply gas to said booth through said filter.

26. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 23, wherein said first gas flow forming mechanism is configured to form a laminar flow of the clean gas in said booth.

27. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 23, wherein the other apparatus is a coater/developer.

28. (New) An apparatus according to claim 23, wherein said second gas flow forming mechanism includes a plate with perforations through which the clean gas is supplied into said load-lock chamber, and an exhaust mechanism configured to exhaust gas from said load-lock chamber.

29. (New) An apparatus according to claim 23, wherein said second gas flow forming mechanism includes a plate with perforations through which the clean gas is supplied into said load-lock chamber, and a circulation unit configured to exhaust gas from said load-lock chamber and to return the exhausted gas to said load-lock chamber through said plate.

30. (New) An apparatus according to claim 23, wherein said second gas flow forming mechanism is configured to form a laminar flow of the clean gas in said load-lock chamber.